

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 SAJ-01

ACDA-07 BIB-01 CU-02 SIL-01 LAB-04 FCSC-01 TRSE-00

OMB-01 FBO-02 /079 W

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R 291010Z SEP 76

FM AMEMBASSY PRAGUE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1170

INFO AMEMBASSY BERLIN

AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST

AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY SOFIA

AMEMBASSY VIENNA

AMEMBASSY WARSAW

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VIENNA FOR AGATT THUROCZY

E.O. 11652: NA

TAGS: PFOR, PINT, PINR, EAGR, CZ

SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR'S CALLS IN SLOVAKIA

REFS A. PRAGUE 2686

B. PRAGUE 1829

1. SUMMARY: AFTER BRNO FAIR, I TRAVELED TO BRATISLAVA FOR OFFICIAL CALLS SEPTEMBER 17 ON SEVERAL SLOVAK LEADERS. LEVEL OF MY RECEPTION THERE WAS UPGRADED FROM WHAT HAD BEEN ARRANGED IN PRAGUE, WHEN SLOVAK PREMIER COLOTKA UNEXPECTEDLY SENT WORD THAT HE WOULD RECEIVE ME. CALLS ON COLOTKA AND SLOVAK NATIONAL COUNCIL (LEGISLATURE) CHAIRMAN SALOGOVIC WERE FILMED AND PARTS OF IT WERE TELEVISED.

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I INDICATED TO MY BRATISLAVA HOSTS THAT I INTEND TO VISIT

SLOVAK CAPITAL AGAIN IN DECEMBER WHEN LOS ANGELES
PHILHARMONIC IS SCHEDULED TO APPEAR AND HOPE THEN TO
RENEW AND EXPAND CONTACTS. END SUMMARY.

2. ON ARRIVING FOR CALL WHICH HAD BEEN SET UP TO SEE
SLOVAK DEPUTY PREMIER HANUS--IN LIEU OF PREMIER--I WAS
INFORMED THAT PREMIER COLOTKA HAD AGREED TO RECEIVE
ME HIMSELF AND THAT SCHEDULE OF CALLS WOULD BE ALTERED
ACCORDINGLY. THEREFORE I CALLED FIRST ON NEW SLOVAK
MINISTER OF EDUCATION JURAJ BUSA. A FORMER TEACHER
AND MOST RECENTLY SSR MINISTER OF CONSTRUCTION AND
TECHNOLOGY, BUSA IN HIS FOLKSY AND FRIENDLY WAY
REVIEWED SLOVAK ACHIEVEMENTS AND PROBLEMS IN EDUCATION
SINCE 1948. HIS CURRENT PROBLEMS ARE EFFECTIVE USE OF
"NEW MATH" IN PRIMARY GRADES; TO INJECT INTO VOCATIONAL
TRAINING A PROPER ACADEMIC MIX IN HIGHER GRADES; AND TO
CONVINCE UNIVERSITY STUDENTS TO ENTER THOSE FACULTIES
NECESSARY FOR THE GOVERNMENT TO MEET ITS MANPOWER REQUIREMENTS.
SELF-ASSURED AND INTELLIGENT, HE TOOK NOTE OF PRESENCE
IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA OF SOME AMERICAN SCHOLARS AND
SAID HE WISHED MORE OF THEM WOULD COME TO BRATISLAVA
INSTEAD OF "STAYING IN PRAGUE." SLOVAKIA, HE ASSURED
ME, HAS MUCH TO OFFER IN EDUCATION NOWADAYS. HE LOOKS
FORWARD TO JOINING ME AT THE DECEMBER LOS ANGELES
PHILHARMONIC CELEBRATIONS "IF PROTOCOL PERMITS HIM TO GO."

3. NEXT I CALLED ON CHAIRMAN OF THE SLOVAK NATIONAL
COUNCIL, VILLIAM SLAGOVIC, WHOM I FOUND ARROGANT
AND TOUGH--WHICH I GATHER IS NOT ALTOGETHER ATYPICAL
OF HIM. AS TELEVISION CAMERAS SHIRRED ACCOMPANIMENT,
SALGOVIC RECITED GLORIES OF SLOVAKIA UNDER SYSTEM
OF "SOCIALIST DEMOCRACY." WHEN THE CAMERAS STOPPED,
HE BECAME SOMEWHAT LESS DIDACTIC AND EVEN ADMITTED
IN RESPONSE TO MY QUESTIONS THAT SOME PROBLEMS
EXISTED IN AGRICULTURE. NOTING IN JEST THAT THE
CZECH LANDS WOULD DO BETTER IF A SLOVAK WERE NAMED
MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE, SALGOVIC ADMITTED SHORTAGES
IN FODDER, BUT DENIED THAT ANY LIVESTOCK WOULD HAVE
TO BE SLAUGHTERED, SINCE THE GOVERNMENT PLANS TO
IMPORT ADEQUATE FODDER TO FEED THEM. HE ALLEGED
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THAT SOME 30 PERCENT OF POTATO HARVEST WILL BE LOST
DUE TO DEFICIENT STORAGE CAPACITY, BUT THAT EFFORTS
ARE BEING MADE TO REDRESS THIS SHORTCOMING. HE
ACKNOWLEDGED THAT CSSR WILL IMPORT FOOD THIS YEAR.
NEAR END OF CALL, SALGOVIC ROSE AND POINTED TO LARGE
PAINTING OF SLOVAK PARTISANS ON WALL BEHIND MY SEAT.
AFTER HAILING THE SLOVAK NATIONAL UPRISING AS A GREAT
EVENT IN HISTORY OF HIS COUNTRY, SALGOVIC NOTABLY

RECALLED THAT MEMBERS OF AMERICAN GREEN MISSION WERE
KILLED ALONGSIDE SLOVAK PATRIOTS IN 1944. I RESPONDED
BY HOPING THAT AN EVENT IN WHICH MEN OF OUR TWO
COUNTRIES DIED FIGHTING SIDE BY SIDE MIGHT SERVE AS
A BRIDGE FOR FUTURE COOPERATION.

4. SLOVAK DEPUTY MINISTER OF CULTURE OLIVER RACZ
APOLOGIZED FOR THE ABSENCE ON OFFICIAL BUSINESS OF
HIS CHIEF, MINISTER OF CULTURE MIROSLAV VALEK.
SPEAKING WITH AN APPARENT AFFECTION FOR HIS SUBJECT,
RACZ REFERRED TO WOODROW WILSON'S ROLE IN FOUNDATION
OF INDEPENDENT STATE OF CZECHS AND SLOVAKS, AND
REVIEWED HISTORY OF TIES BETWEEN SLOVAKIA AND THE
UNITED STATES. NOTING ESPECIALLY THE TIES OF SLOVAK
CULTURAL ORGANIZATIONS, E.G., MATICA SLOVENSKA, WITH
SLOVAKS IN THE U.S., RACZ SAID THAT U.S. BICENTENNIAL
WAS BEING CELEBRATED "IN MANY COUNTRIES." HE WENT
ON TO REVIEW DEVELOPMENTS IN CULTURE IN SLOVAK
REPUBLIC, AND TOLD ME THAT I WOULD FIND "THE SAME
ATMOSPHERE OF LIBERTY" IN CSSR AS EXISTS IN THE
UNITED STATES. DECIDING IT WAS MORE IMPORTANT "TO PLUG"
AMERICAN CULTURAL EVENTS THAN TO DEBATE "LIBERTY" ON A COURTESY CALL,
I MENTIONED THAT SEVERAL CULTURAL EVENTS WERE COMING TO BRATISLAVA
THIS FALL, NAMELY IGOR KIPNIS CONCERT NOVEMBER 26 AND LOS
ANGELES PHILHARMONIC CONCERT DECEMBER 8, COMMENDED THEM TO
HIS ATTENTION AND HOPED THAT SLOVAK-AMERICAN COOPERATION IN
CULTURAL MATTERS WOULD CONTINUE AND DEVELOP FURTHER ONCE A
CULTURAL AND SCIENTIFIC EXCHANGES AGREEMENT HAD BEEN SIGNED.

5. MY CALL ON BRATISLAVA MAYOR LADISLAV MARTINAK
PASSED IN FRIENDLY ATMOSPHERE ALTHOUGH I FOUND SOMEWHAT
TRYING HIS PENCHANT FOR GIVING A ROSY INTERPRETATION
TO EVERY ISSUE WE TOUCHED ON. HE DID GIVE
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SOME FIGURES ON BRATISLAVA'S HOUSING PROBLEMS,
ADMITTED THAT THERE WERE TOO MANY CARS FOR TOO FEW
PARKING PLACES AND OBLIQUELY ACKNOWLEDGED THAT
FOREIGN WORKERS FROM POLAND, YUGOSLAVIA AND HUNGARY
HAD BEEN HELPING TO MEET SLOVAKIA'S LABOR SHORTAGE.
IN RESPONSE TO MY QUERY, HE STATED THAT THERE WERE NO
PROBLEMS WITH MIGRANT WORKERS--YUGOSLAV MANAGERS WERE

UIRED TO TAKE CARE OF THEIR WORKERS, PLACING
ON THEM THE NECESSARY RESTRICTIONS.

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6. IN MY NEXT CALL, AFTER MAKING AN OFFICIAL STATEMENT FOR BENEFIT OF TV CAMERAS, SLOVAK PREMIER PETER COLOTKA INTRODUCED HIMSELF BY SAYING THAT HIS FATHER HAD BEEN THREE TIMES TO THE UNITED STATES AND WOULD HAVE RETURNED THERE BUT IT DID NOT WORK OUT. OBVIOUSLY INTELLIGENT, ENERGETIC AND QUIETLY SELF-CONFIDENT, COLOTKA REVIEWED DEVELOPMENTS IN SLOVAKIA WITH PRIDE, CONVICTION AND APPARENTLY GENUINE DESIRE TO INFORM ME ABOUT HIS NATIVE COUNTRY. HE POINTEDLY SOUGHT TO STRESS THE POSITIVE IN U.S. - CZECHOSLOVAK RELATIONS AND CHOSE NOT TO RAISE THE GOLD/CLAIMS ISSUE DIRECTLY-- ALTHOUGH HE WAS SEEMINGLY FULLY AWARE OF IT AND ALLUDED TO IT.

7. COLOTKA EXPLAINED IN RESPONSE TO MY QUESTION, THAT RECENT GOVERNMENT RESHUFFLE (REF A) WAS DUE TO SEVERAL
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FACTORS AND HAD WORKED OUT WELL FOR THE SLOVAK GOVERNMENT'S POINT OF VIEW. THE SLOVAKS ARE PARTICULARLY PLEASED SINCE JAN GREGOR, FORMER DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER IN FEDERAL GOC, NOW BECOMES SLOVAK DEPUTY PREMIER, THUS FREEING VACALAV VACOK TO TAKE OVER MINISTRY OF CONSTRUCTION AND TECHNOLOGY--WHICH HAS SINCE JULY BEEN HEADED TEMPORARILY BY ANOTHER DEPUTY PREMIER, JULIUS HANUS. COLOTKA CAUTIONED ME NOT TO INTERPRET CHANGES AS MEANING ONLY THAT THERE HAVE BEEN PROBLEMS. SOMETIMES MINISTERS GET TOO CLOSE TO THEIR JOBS AND LOSE PERSPECTIVE, COLOTKA SAID, OR THEY WISH TO RETURN TO A FORMER PROFESSION, AS WAS THE CASE WITH FORMER SLOVAK MINISTER OF EDUCATION STEFAN CHOCHOL, RELIEVED IN JULY AND NOW TEACHING IN KOSICE.

8. TOWARDS END OF MY VISIT WITH HIM, COLOTKA EXPRESSED HIS APPROVAL OF PERSONAL CONTACTS SUCH AS WE HAD BEEN HAVING. HE SAID HE HOPED I WOULD COME BACK TO SLOVAKIA AND, MOTIONING TO EMBOFF ACCOMPANYING ME, EXTENDED THE INVITATION TO MY STAFF AS WELL. I ASSURED HIM I WOULD BE BACK FOR PERFORMANCE OF THE LOS ANGELES PHILHARMONIC DECEMBER 8 AND HOPED THAT PRESIDENT HUSAK'S ASSURANCE TO ME (REF B) THAT GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS WOULD BE AVAILABLE TO EMBASSY STAFF WOULD ALSO HOLD TRUE FOR SLOVAKIA. MEETING ENDED ON A CORDIAL NOTE WITH SHORT TOUR OF PREMISES AND JOKES ABOUT JANOSIK--THE SLOVAK ROBIN HOOD--AND HIS BANDS OF ROBBERS HAVING BEEN THE "FIRST GOVERNMENT" OF SLOVAKIA.

9. DURING STAY IN SLOVAK CAPITAL, I INSPECTED U.S. CONGEN BUILDING AND FOUND IT IN GOOD CONDITION. SUBJECT OF RE-OPENING FACILITY, HOWEVER, WAS NOT RAISED DURING CALLS BY EITHER SIDE. I FEEL CONFIDENT THAT EVERYONE WAS AWARE THAT ANY MOVE IN THIS DIRECTION WOULD BE RELATED TO THE SETTLEMENT OF THE GOLD/CLAIMS ISSUE.

10. COMMENT: WE ARE PLEASED TO HAVE RE-ESTABLISHED FACE-TO-FACE CONTACT WITH SLOVAK OFFICIALDOM AFTER A RATHER LONG LAPSE. AMBASSADOR SHERER VISITED BRATISLAVA LAST IN JANUARY 1975. WHILE MY REQUEST TO MEET SLOVAK PARTY FIRST SECRETARY JOSEF LENART WAS NOT GRANTED, LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
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AGREEMENT OF SLOVAK PREMIER COLOTKA AND OTHER

PROMINENT SLOVAK LEADERS TO RECEIVE ME AND THE TENOR OF OUR DISCUSSIONS MADE THIS A GRATIFYING FIRST TRIP FOR ME TO THE SLOVAK CAPITAL.
BYRNE

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